6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

Coast Range. Even in 1945 mild hostility characterised Tahltan-Kaska relations and young men of the former group boasted of their ancestors successfully fighting the Kaska. Other informants corroborated the fact of war between the two groups. Nobody recalled trouble with the Bear Lake Sekani. The upper Liard River people regarded the Etca'otena of the Fort Nelson River as stupid and almost inhuman but fighting with them could not be recalled.[10]

Large-scale aggression did not occur frequently and there existed no value on fighting for its own sake. War was defensive in theory, a means of subduing bad or potentially dangerous people. Woman felt dismay when preparations for hostility began and some sought, with only rare success, to keep their men from battle. Both sexes equally welcomed the resumption of peace. Typically a war party originated in a situation like the following: A man, visiting the camp of a stranger, saw a scalp which he suspected belonged to one of his relatives. The traveler returned to his own country and discovered who was missing. If several people had not been heard of for a long time the original surmise became fact. Driven by anger, the man began hostilities by killing a woman who had originally belonged to the enemy group. In front of his companions he displayed a knife, blade uppermost, and moved it in a semicircle as a gesture of hostility. "I'm still hungry," he would say. Then those people prepared to attack the enemy. The desire to steal women took its place alongside revenge as an auxiliary motive for aggression. The wish for prestige played little part in promoting aboriginal warfare.

A war leader was not identical with the band's headman. Sometimes the expedition also included a shaman who worked sorcery against the enemy. While the war chief acted as "boss" of the war party he had no power to inflict corporal punishment. At most he could order a disobedient member to quit the group. Several microcosmic groups probably provided recruits for a military expedition, so that the leader assumed the proportions of a true political authority. The expedition itself contained two divisions, young men about 19 or 20 years old, who packed the goods, and warriors, averaging about 30 years of age, who did the actual fighting. Women never directly participated in aggressive warfare but they sometimes visited the enemy camp to act as spies. Such an envoy might return to tearfully beg that the intended victims be spared.

Preparatory to fighting men made new knives, lances, fitted with stone or caribou horn blades, and many arrows. Each warrior provided himself with two bows in the event that one should break. In addition the men donned bear skin armor in the form of a sleeveless coat that reached to the knees. This was made from hides tanned with the hair on and worn with the hair out. Magical significance is probable, since among the Indians the bear enjoyed a reputation for his fierceness. Over his head the warrior carried, fur exposed, a caribou-skin helmet lined with birch bark. Sometimes headgear included a visor covering the whole face and provided with holes for vision.[11] Helmets

[10] For counter attitudes among the Slave, see Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 73–75.

[11] Tlingit armor consisted of long tunics made with two or three thicknesses of hide or hide reinforced with wooden slats. Twined-rod jackets were used by the Chilkat and helmets of solid wood with visors held in the teeth. Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (1932), 330; Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 187.